

FAX

**School District of the City of Ladue
9703 Conway Road
St. Louis, MO 63124
314-983-5302
FAX 314-994-0867
bhufford@ladueschools.net**

**TO: Dr. Charles N. Davis
Missouri School of Journalism
573-884-5400**

**FROM: Beth Hufford
Executive Assistant/Custodian of Records**

RE: Records Request

DATE: February 24, 2012

PAGES: 31 (including cover page)

I did not get a response from you to my email of February 13, 2012. I am sending the following documents in response to your Sunshine Law Request of February 9, 2012.

You can contact me at the above number if you have any questions.



Donna Jahnke <djahnke@ladueschools.net>

cc: Reply regarding religion curriculum

4 messages

To: djahnke@ladueschools.net

Sun, Nov 6, 2011 at 4:51 PM

I misspelled your email address when I first sent this. This is your copy. I have already emailed Richter and Helm.

We did not receive your attachment, however we do have an understanding of your position about "teaching religion" verses "teaching about religion". We believe the curriculum is in a gray area, when it should be perfectly clear to anyone under any condition, it's not. I have done my own research of Judaism on the Internet and I have no doubt a substantive teaching of Judaism can be done without quoting scripture. I understand a teacher can read any religious text word for word as long as it is prefaced as being "about religion" and not "teaching religion". Teachers can also teach a class on how to make a noose, and preface its intent is "not for hanging people", just "hanging items". It's just not believable nor does it make it right. We believe this reading and perhaps the entire religious curriculum needs to be reviewed and rewritten in a manner that is more objective than suggestive.

Sincerely,

This e-mail and any attachments may contain confidential and privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender by return e-mail, delete this e-mail and destroy any copies. Any dissemination or use of this information by a person other than the intended recipient is unauthorized.

Sincerely,

Donna Jahnke <djahnke@ladueschools.net>

Mon, Nov 7, 2011 at 3:23 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: Cathy Richter <crichter@ladueschools.net>

Bcc: Marsha Chappelow <mchappelow@ladueschools.net>

I received your note regarding our 6th grade Social Studies curriculum and checked on the materials you referenced to Dr. Richter. The resource is from History Alive!, an interactive program that aims to bring social studies to life in a middle school classroom. Based on your message I understand you have a concern with the written materials that accompany this program, specifically the information provided on Judaism and other religions.

Attached are several documents for your information. I have included the Board Policies that Dr. Richter referenced in an earlier email and a copy of our Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form. Please complete the form and return it to me. The form will provide us with the information we need to move our review process forward.

If you have any additional questions please contact me at 994-7080.

Thank You,

Dr. Donna Jahnke

[Quoted text hidden]

Donna Jahnke Ph.D.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

4 attachments

 Instructional Materials Policy.doc
27K

 PUBLIC QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR CONCERNS REGARDING DISTRICT INSTRUCTIONAL:MEDIA:LIBRARY MATERIALS
Policy KLB.doc
25K

 Teaching About Religion Policy IGAC.doc
23K

 Guidelines for Materials Reconsideration.doc
28K

Donna Jahnke <djahnke@ladueschools.net>

Wed, Nov 16, 2011 at 3:30 PM

To: [REDACTED]

I wanted to confirm that I received your request to review of a portion of our 6th grade Social Studies materials. At this time we will begin the review process at the district office level. I will get back to you once the review is complete.

Thank You,

Dr. Donna Jahnke
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Ladue School District

On Sun, Nov 6, 2011 at 4:51 PM, Gary Davis <garydavis@mail.com> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

—
Donna Jahnke Ph.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Ladue School District

To: Donna Jahnke <djahnke@ladueschools.net>

Thu, Nov 17, 2011 at 10:16 PM

Thank you for the acknowledgment. Although I have turned in a portion of the reading material, it is my hope that you will review the entire Religion Unit. I would really like to have a copy of the entire unit for perusal, instead of having to react (if need be) to each reading material as it comes to me. Please let me know if this is plausible.

SINCERELY,
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Donna Jahnke

Sent: 11/16/11 03:30 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: cc: Reply regarding religion curriculum

[Quoted text hidden]

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

LADUE SCHOOL DISTRICT

FILE: IIA

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

As the governing body of the district, the Board is legally responsible for the selection of instructional materials. Since the Board is a policy-making body, it delegates to professional personnel of the district the authority for the selection of instructional materials in accordance with Board policies and regulations. Every effort will be made to ensure that instructional materials are distributed equitably among the district's schools so that a balanced distribution of instructional materials will occur.

Materials for the school classrooms and school libraries will be selected by the appropriate professional personnel, in consultation with the administration. When the budget for the year is approved in final form by the Board, the superintendent or designee shall direct the purchase of books, supplies, equipment and other instructional materials required, within the limits of the adopted budget. The superintendent or designee shall audit all claims and submit to the Board for approval and authorization for payment.

It is the responsibility of the professional staff to select instructional materials of the highest quality that will support the educational curriculum of the district. Instructional materials shall be selected on the basis that they provide the following:

- materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students served;
- materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards;
- a background of information which will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives;
- materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop, under guidance, the practice of analytical reading and thinking;
- materials representative of varied religious, ethnic and cultural groups and their contributions to our heritage.

The value and impact of any textbook, library or other instructional material will be judged as a whole, taking into account the purpose of the material rather than individual and isolated expressions or incidents of the work. Multi-cultural, disability-awareness and gender-fair concepts will be considered as a selection criteria for materials.

Adopted: 10/24/94

Amended: 05/08/06

Cross Refs: DK, Payment Procedures
KLB, Public Questions, Comments or Concerns Regarding District
Instructional/Media/Library Materials

Legal Refs: §§ 170.051-.171 RSMo.

Ladue School District, St. Louis, Missouri

LADUE SCHOOL DISTRICT

FILE: KLB

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR CONCERNS REGARDING DISTRICT
INSTRUCTIONAL/MEDIA/LIBRARY MATERIALS**

The Ladue Board of Education has the ultimate responsibility for establishing the curriculum and for purchasing instructional and/or media materials to be used in the district. While the Board recognizes the right of students to free access to the many different types of books and instructional materials, the Board also recognizes the right of teachers and administrators to select books and other materials in accord with current trends in education and the established curriculum.

It is therefore the policy of the Board to require that books and other instructional materials shall be chosen for values of educational interest and the enlightenment of all students in the community. Instructional materials shall not be excluded on the basis of the writer's racial, nationalistic, political or religious views. Every effort will be made to provide materials that present all points of view concerning the international, national and local problems and issues of our times. Books or other instructional or media materials of sound factual authority shall not be proscribed, nor removed from the library shelves or classrooms on the basis of partisan or doctrinal approval or disapproval. The Board will strive to provide stimulating, effective materials that will be appropriate to the community's values and the students' abilities and maturity levels.

The Board encourages community input and comments regarding the district's instructional, media and library materials and directs the district staff to answer all questions regarding the selection of the materials. The superintendent or designee will create procedures to efficiently address community member questions or concerns and to provide for an adequate review of the materials, if necessary.

Adopted: 10/24/94
Amended: 07/27/98
Amended: 05/08/06

Cross Refs: BDDH, Public Participation at Board Meetings
IIA, Instructional Materials
IIAA, Textbook Selection and Adoption
IIAC, Instructional Media Centers/School Libraries

Legal Refs: Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District v. Pico, U.S.
853, 871 (1982)

Ladue School District, St. Louis, Missouri

LADUE SCHOOL DISTRICT

FILE: IGAC

TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION

Pursuant to state and federal law, the Ladue School District may teach about religion but may not promote any particular religion or religious belief.

No course or portion of any course taught in the district will have the primary purpose or effect of promoting or inhibiting religion.

Nothing in this policy is to be construed as inhibiting constitutionally protected religious expression by any individual.

Adopted: 10/24/94
Amended: 12/08/03
Reviewed: 05/08/06

Legal Refs: Mo. Const., Art. I, §§ 5-7
U.S. Const., Art. I

Ladue School District, St. Louis, Missouri

Challenges to and Reconsideration of Learning Resources – Policy KLB 2011-2012

In compliance with Board Policy KLB - *Public Questions, Comments or Concerns Regarding District Instructional/ Media/Library Materials*, the Board of Education desires to give students, their parents, residents of the district and district staff the opportunity to challenge the quality and suitability of materials used in the district's educational programs. The district subscribes to the principles of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

A. School Level Review

If an individual or group desires to make a complaint concerning a Learning Resource, the following procedures will apply:

1. The complainant will submit and review the completed form - *Request for Consideration of Learning Resources – School Level* with the school principal.
2. A school site review committee will be appointed by the principal of the affected building. The committee will include certified staff and parents with students attending the building. The exact size of the review committee will be at the discretion of the building principal. The committee will select a chairperson from the members appointed by the principal.
3. The school review committee members will be provided with copies of: (1) the completed *Request for Consideration of Learning Resources – School Level*, (2) the Learning Resource in question, (3) Board policy KLB - *Public Questions, Comments or Concerns Regarding District Instructional/ Media/Library Materials*, (4) Intellectual Freedom Documents, [Library Bill of Rights (ALA), the Student's Right to Read (NCTE), Freedom to View (ALA), The Freedom to Read (ALA, AAP), Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program (ALA)], and any other relevant materials.
4. The school principal will take the following actions:
 - a. Schedule a Learning Resource review hearing as expeditiously as possible, normally within 30 calendar days of the complaint;
 - b. Advise the complainant, the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Leadership/Curriculum & Instruction, and members of the school level review committee of the date, time, and location of the Learning Resource review hearing;
 - c. Following the hearing and the decision of the committee, give written notice to the complainant, the Superintendent of Schools, and the

Assistant Superintendent for Educational Leadership/Curriculum & Instruction of the review committee's decision concerning retention of the Learning Resource; if the decision is to retain the Learning Resource, the notice shall include the complainant's right to appeal that decision to a district review committee.

B. District Level Review

If the matter is appealed in writing to the district level, the following procedures will apply:

1. A district review committee will be appointed by the Superintendent of Schools. The committee will include certified staff and parents with students currently attending the district. The exact size of the review committee will be at the discretion of the superintendent. The district review committee will not include members from the school review committee. The superintendent will select a chairperson from the members of the review committee.
2. The principal will present the findings of the school review committee as part of the school presentation.
3. The district review committee members will be provided with copies of: (1) the completed *Request for Consideration of Learning Resources – School Level*, (2) the Learning Resource in question, (3) Board policy KLB - *Public Questions, Comments or Concerns Regarding District Instructional/Media/Library Materials*, (4) Intellectual Freedom Documents, [Library Bill of Rights (ALA), the Student's Right to Read (NCTE), Freedom to View (ALA), The Freedom to Read (ALA, AAP), Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program (ALA)], and any other relevant materials.
4. The chairperson of the district review committee will take the following actions:
 - a. Schedule a Learning Resource review hearing as expeditiously as possible, normally within 30 calendar days of the complaint;
 - b. Advise the complainant, the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Leadership/Curriculum & Instruction, and members of the district level review committee of the date, time, and location of the Learning Resource review hearing;
 - c. Following the hearing and the decision of the committee, give written notice to the complainant, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Leadership/Curriculum & Instruction of the review committee's decision concerning retention of

the Learning Resource; if the decision is to retain the Learning Resource, the notice shall include the complainant's right to appeal that decision to the Board of Education.

C. Agenda for Site, District and Board Review Committee

The agenda for a Learning Resource review hearing will include:

1. Introductions and review of the hearing agenda;
2. Presentation of relevant materials as submitted in writing will be shared with all committee members. Complainant will be afforded the opportunity to share concerns in a presentation to the review committee. The chairperson may limit the time available for this presentation if necessary and appropriate;
3. Review committee will review the information provided, evaluate the policy regarding the selection of instructional materials, and make a decision regarding the use of the instructional resource in question;
4. The decision of the review committee will be communicated per B.4.c. of this document.

D. Board of Education Review

If the matter is appealed to the Board of Education, the following procedures will apply:

1. Board members will be provided with copies of: (1) the completed *Request for Consideration of Learning Resources – School Level*, (2) the Learning Resource in question, (3) Board policy KLB - *Public Questions, Comments or Concerns Regarding District Instructional/ Media/Library Materials*, (4) Intellectual Freedom Documents, [Library Bill of Rights (ALA), the Student's Right to Read (NCTE), Freedom to View (ALA), The Freedom to Read (ALA, AAP), Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program (ALA)], and any other relevant materials.
2. The President of the Board will take the following actions:
 - a. Schedule a Learning Resource review hearing in a time and manner that allows for the appeal to be heard in a timely manner;
 - b. Advise the complainant, the Superintendent of Schools, and members of the Board of the date, time, and location of the Learning Resource review hearing;

- c. Following the hearing and the decision of the Board, give written notice to the complainant, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Leadership/Curriculum & Instruction of the Board's decision concerning retention of the Learning Resource. The decision of the Board shall be final.

LADUE SCHOOL DISTRICT
GUIDELINES FOR
RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

I. Questions/Complaints/Concerns Regarding Instructional Materials

Persons questioning any instructional materials used in a school's educational program should first discuss the issue with the principal. During that discussion, the principal should review established district procedures for selecting instructional materials (Board Policies KLB, IIA, IIAA, IIAC; and "Library/Media Center Selection Guidelines" if the question concerns a material in the Library/Media Center) and attempt to resolve the matter.

II. Appeal Process

If the issue is not resolved at the building level, an appeal may be made to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction using the *Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials* form. Upon receipt of the form, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction should meet with the Superintendent to review the reconsideration request. The appeal will either be denied or upheld, or other appropriate responses may be suggested. The decision of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction will be communicated in writing to the person who completed the reconsideration request form.

The decision of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction may be appealed in writing to the Board of Education. The Board of Education will determine whether or not to review the request for reconsideration and the decision of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. If the appeal is denied by the Board of Education, the person originating the request to reconsider will be informed of the decision in writing.

The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction will notify principals of decisions regarding instructional materials that have been questioned. Any questioned material should continue in use until a final decision has been made. The final decision regarding any instructional material will be binding for all schools.

NOTE: These guidelines address policy KLB on page 35.

**LADUE SCHOOL DISTRICT
REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION
OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Title of Instructional Material _____

Author/Producer _____

Type of Media _____ Grade Level _____

Person Initiating Request (please print) _____

Complainant Represents _____ Self
Organization _____

(Name of Organization)

1. Do you have children attending this school district? _____ Yes _____ No

If "yes," please list name(s), age(s), and school(s) attending: _____

2. What brought this material to your attention? (Review, word of mouth, etc.) Please be specific.

3. Did you read, view, or listen to the entire material? _____ Yes _____ No

If "no," what parts did you read, view, or listen to? Please be specific.

4. What is objectionable regarding the material, and why? Please be specific, citing pages, chapters, et.

*Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials**Page 2*

5. What is the theme of this material? Please be specific.

6. Did you locate any review(s) of this material? _____ Yes ___ No

If "yes," please list the review(s). _____

7. Did the review(s) substantiate your feelings? _____ Yes _____ No

8. Is there any educational or literary merit to the material? _____ Yes _____ No

Please explain: _____

9. What material(s) do you suggest be provided to replace the item in question? _____

10. What do you suggest be done with the item in question? _____

Person Requesting Reconsideration

Date

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Date Received

**This completed form must be returned to the
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction at the Board Office.**

LADUE SCHOOL DISTRICT
REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION
OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Title of Instructional Material Unknown - See Attached "A"

Author/Producer Unknown - See Attached "A"

Type of Media Print Grade Level 6th

Person Initiating Request (please print) [REDACTED]

Complainant Represents ☒ Self
Organization _____

1. Do you have children attending this school district? ☒ Yes ☐ No (Name of Organization)

If "yes," please list name(s), age(s), and school(s) attending:

[REDACTED] - Ladue Middle School
[REDACTED] - Spoeckle Elementary School

2. What brought this material to your attention? (Review, word of mouth, etc.) Please be specific.

Brought home as part of social studies
homework (6th Grade)

3. Did you read, view, or listen to the entire material? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If "no," what parts did you read, view, or listen to? Please be specific.

4. What is objectionable regarding the material, and why? Please be specific, citing pages, chapters, et.

It teaches religion instead of teaching
about religion. The reading material quotes
scripture in a manner that can be considered
as fact. I have seen other teaching programs
on this subject that can easily replace the
program and still satisfy an understanding
of Religion.

Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials

Page 2

5. What is the theme of this material? Please be specific.

Religion - Bible teachings of!
God's Covenant with Abraham / Enslavement of Israel, i.e.
The Exodus from Egypt / Moses Receiving the Ten Commandments
Joshua's Conquest of Jericho

6. Did you locate any review(s) of this material? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If "yes," please list the review(s).

7. Did the review(s) substantiate your feelings? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Is there any educational or literary merit to the material? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please explain: Given the limited scope of the
question, I can not answer

9. What material(s) do you suggest be provided to replace the item in question?

See Attached "B"

10. What do you suggest be done with the item in question? Eliminate it from
the Religion Unit and replace it with materials
that have/show no intent, neither clearly or
indirectly as teaching religion

[Redacted Signature]
Person Requesting Reconsideration

11-10-11
Date

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction

Date Received

**This completed form must be returned to the
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction at the Board Office.**

A

Event A: God's Covenant with Abraham

Abram was one of the founders of the Jewish religion, and therefore an important figure in the history of the ancient Israelites. Historians believe Abram (which means "blessed father") was born about 4,000 years ago in the city of Ur in ancient Mesopotamia. According to the *Torah*, a series of Jewish holy texts, God visited Abram and instructed him to leave Mesopotamia: "Leave your own country . . . and go to a country that I will show you." Abram obeyed God, and at the age of 75 led his family west into the land of Canaan.

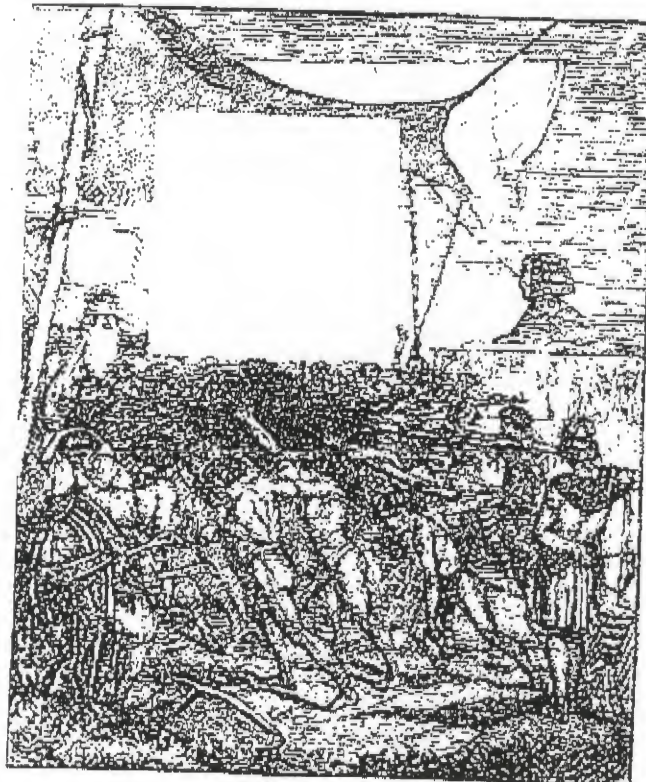
Abram and his family settled in Canaan, but a severe lack of food, or *famine*, forced them to leave the land and live in Egypt for a short time. According to the *Torah*, after Abram returned to Canaan, God visited him again. God promised to make Abram the father of a nation of people and to give them the entire land of Canaan in which to live. God told Abram, "Your descendants shall be as numerous as the stars." In a third visit, God fulfilled this promise by making a sacred agreement, or *covenant*, with Abram. This promise was a symbol of God's special favor and protection. In return, Abram agreed that his children and relatives, or *descendants*, would devote themselves to God. As a mark of this covenant, God renamed Abram *Abraham*, which means "father of many." The nation of people that descended from Abraham became known as the Israelites because Abraham's grandson Jacob came to be called Israel. According to the *Torah*, one night Jacob wrestled with God, who appeared to him as a stranger. When Jacob would not release him, God said to Jacob, "You shall be called Jacob no more, but Israel ["he who struggles with God"] shall be your name." The Israelites believed that God's covenant with them was a sign that they were a chosen people, and that Canaan was their promised land. But a long, hard struggle still lay before them.



Event B: The Enslavement of the Israelites

Abraham's grandson Jacob had 12 sons, and his favorite son was called Joseph. According to the Torah, Joseph's brothers were jealous of him and wanted to get rid of him. To do so, they sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt. Although he was a slave, Joseph rose to power after he successfully interpreted a dream of the Egyptian leader, or *pharaoh*, and prevented a famine from striking the land. The pharaoh rewarded him, and over time, Joseph became the second most powerful person in Egypt. Another famine in Canaan forced Joseph's brothers to journey to Egypt in search of food. Joseph eventually forgave his brothers for selling him into slavery, and the entire family—including Jacob—came and settled in Egypt around 1700 B.C.E.

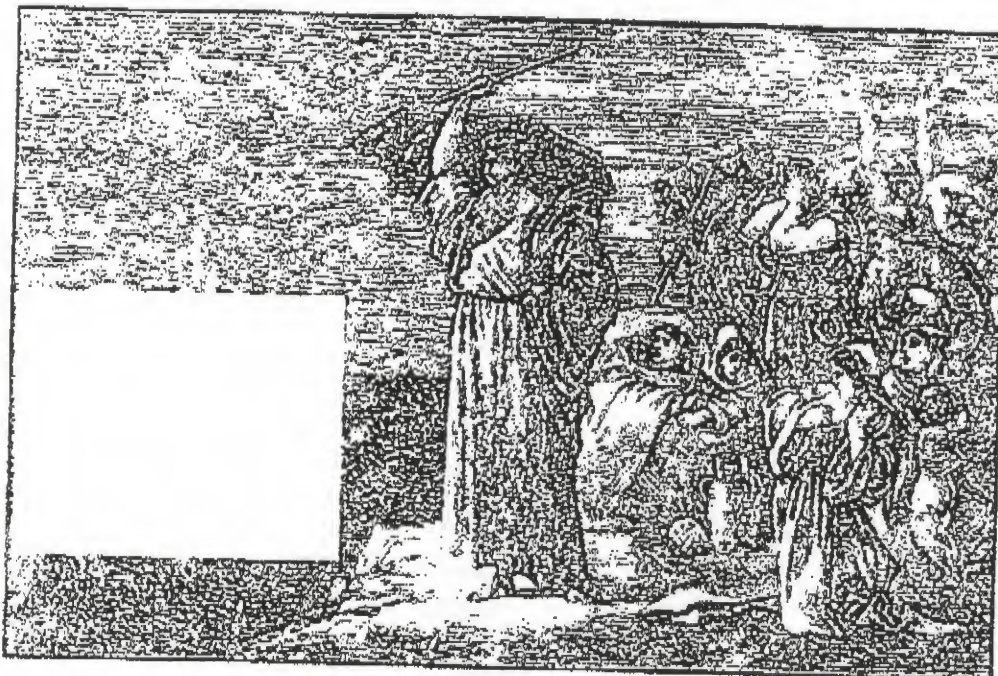
According to the Torah, Jacob and his descendants "increased in numbers and became very powerful" in Egypt. The Torah states that many years later, after Jacob and his sons died, "a new king ascended the throne of Egypt, one who knew nothing of Joseph." This king was likely Pharaoh Ahmose, who ruled Egypt from approximately 1550 B.C.E. to 1525 B.C.E. Ahmose was afraid that the Israelites were growing too powerful and that they might join Egypt's enemies and wage war against Egypt. In order to prevent such a war, Ahmose enslaved the Israelites. He hired stern overseers to force the Israelites to perform backbreaking labor. Israelite slaves built roads, giant statues, temples, palaces, and cities. They were often poorly fed and severely beaten. Despite these unbearable conditions, the Israelites continued to grow in number. Pharaoh Seti I, who ruled from 1306 B.C.E. to 1290 B.C.E., was determined to stop this growing population. He ordered that all newborn Israelite males be killed. One baby, named Moses, escaped this fate, and he changed the history of the Israelites forever.



Event C: The Exodus from Egypt

Moses was born to an Israelite woman in Egypt around the late thirteenth century B.C.E. Moses' mother was afraid that her son, like other newborn Israelite males, would be killed by the Egyptians. So, according to the Torah, she put the baby in a small basket and sent the basket down the Nile River to keep him from harm. The pharaoh's daughter found Moses while she was bathing in the river. She took him home and raised him as her own son. When Moses was an adult, he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite slave. Outraged, Moses struck and killed the Egyptian. He fled east to the desert to escape punishment for the murder.

At this time, according to the Torah, God heard the cries of the enslaved Israelites and remembered the covenant with Abraham. God appeared to Moses and instructed him to return to Egypt and lead the Israelites out of slavery and back into the promised land of Canaan. He obeyed and returned to Egypt. Moses went before the new pharaoh, Ramesses II, son of Seti I, and demanded that he free the Israelites. Ramesses refused. As punishment, God brought down a series of terrible plagues on the Egyptians, including swarms of snakes, frogs, and mosquitoes, which caused great destruction. At last Ramesses II gave in and decided to allow the Israelites to go. Moses then led them east out of Egypt around 1270 B.C.E. The Torah refers to this event as *The Exodus*, meaning "the departure of a large group of people." According to the Torah, as the Israelites left, Ramesses II changed his mind and ordered his army to pursue them. It is believed that the army chased the Israelites to the banks of the Red Sea. The water prevented the Israelites from escaping, and they were terrified. But Moses reassured them by saying, "The Lord will fight for you." On God's instructions, Moses raised his staff and the waters parted, allowing the Israelites to cross unharmed. When the Egyptian army tried to follow them, Moses raised his staff again. At his command, the waters flooded over the Egyptians and they drowned. The Israelites believed that this was a miracle that had saved their lives and so they placed their faith in Moses and their new God.



Event D: Moses Receiving the Ten Commandments

The Torah tells how Moses led the Israelites out of eastern Egypt and south into the wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula. As they traveled back to Canaan, it is likely that they first traveled south along the western edge of the peninsula until they reached Mount Sinai, or the "Mountain of God." According to the Torah, the Israelites traveled for three months before they arrived there.

When they reached Mount Sinai, Moses traveled up the Mount alone to receive God's word. According to the Torah, it was there that Moses received the Ten Commandments from God. These *commandments*, or religious laws, were engraved on two tablets of stone and are the foundation of the Jewish religion. The first and most important commandment stated, "You shall have no other God before Me." This meant that the Israelites should worship only one God, not the many Gods most people worshipped at the time. Other commandments provided guidelines for moral (proper) behavior, such as "You shall not steal," and "You shall honor your father and mother." As long as the Israelites promised to live according to the Ten Commandments, God promised to look after and protect them. According to the Torah, God instructed Moses to build a magnificent wood and gold sacred chest, or *Ark*, in which to keep the Ten Commandments. This became known as the Ark of the Covenant because it symbolized the promises between God and the Israelites. God also told the Israelites to build a sacred structure known as the *Tabernacle*. The Tabernacle was an elaborate tent made of wood, gold, and rich fabrics in shades of purple and red. It was the Israelites' first temple, and an Israelite *High Priest*, or religious leader, conducted religious rituals there. The Tabernacle housed the Ark as the Israelites continued their journey to the promised land of Canaan.



Event E: Joshua's Conquest of Jericho

Moses and the Israelites left Mount Sinai and traveled north along the eastern edge of the Sinai Peninsula. According to the Torah, God commanded the Israelites to continue their journey toward Canaan: "Go up from here . . . to the land which I promised to Abraham. I will bring you to a land flowing with milk and honey." The journey was a long, hard one. The landscape across which the Israelites traveled was hot and dry, and food and water were scarce. When they reached the edge of Canaan, they were dismayed to see that the

land was already occupied and well protected. Discouraged, the Israelites began to doubt Moses' and God's promise. "Why should the Lord bring us to this land to die in battle? Returning to Egypt would be better than this!" The Israelites' lack of faith greatly angered God. As punishment, God refused to let the Israelites into Canaan, and they were forced to live in the wilderness for 40 years.

Forty years later, around 1200 B.C.E., Moses, now an elderly man, once again led the Israelites to Canaan's border. When Moses died, an Israelite named Joshua became their leader. According to the Torah, God told Joshua it was now time for the Israelites to claim Canaan for their own. Joshua sent two men ahead to scout the land, and then led the Israelites west across the Jordan River into Canaan. The first city they encountered was Jericho. The Torah states that Jericho, and therefore all of Canaan, was conquered after the Israelite holy men circled the city for seven days. On the seventh day, the holy men raised their trumpets made of ram's horns and "blew the trumpets . . . When the [Israelite] army heard the trumpet sound, they raised a great shout, and down fell the walls." Some historians believe that this battle between the Israelites and Canaanites actually took place over many years. They believe that the Israelites engaged in small conflicts with the Canaanites, and gradually took over the region through land settlement and adaptation to the existing culture. The Israelites eventually established the nation of Israel in Canaan. At this time, they also established the beginnings of the Jewish religion.



Ancient Mesopotamia

"B"



Ancient Mesopotamia is a seventh grade World History/World Geography unit designed to be used by both students and teachers. It is designed in such a way that it can be used by students as an educational resource supplementary to the traditional social studies textbook, or it can be used by teachers in order to attain important vocabulary terms, vocabulary exercises, a study guide, an example quiz, hands-on activities, and final unit evaluations.

WELCOME AREA

Whether you are a student or a teacher, a special welcome message awaits you in one of the designated areas.

Once you are finished in the WELCOME AREA, click on the HOME icon to access the appropriate area.

- STUDENTS
- TEACHERS

STUDENT AREA

This area is for students to explore the many different aspects of ancient Mesopotamia. Check out each area, or explore only those areas that interest you. Have fun!

When you are finished with an area, click on the HOME icon, and it will return you to the student area.

- IMPORTANT VOCABULARY
- GEOGRAPHY
- THE SUMERIAN CITY-STATE
- THE ZIGGURAT
- CUNEIFORM
- GILGAMESH
- SARGON I
- HAMMURABI OF BABYLON
- CONTRIBUTIONS



TEACHER AREA

This area is designed for teachers. In this area, teachers not only can explore the different aspects of ancient Mesopotamia as located in the student area, but they can also view teacher-created materials that I use when teaching ancient Mesopotamia to my seventh grade students. In this area, I have included a vocabulary list, vocabulary exercises to reinforce the terms and definitions, a study guide, an example quiz, hands-on activities that can be used in the classroom, and final unit evaluations.

SPECIAL NOTE: To get out of the student area when you are finished viewing either the Mesopotamia content or vocabulary terms, click on the bottom globe, and it will return you to the teacher area.

- STUDENT AREA
- IMPORTANT VOCABULARY
- VOCABULARY EXERCISES
- STUDY GUIDE
- QUIZZES
- HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES
- UNIT EVALUATIONS



MAIL

Your comments and/or suggestions are welcome, but please remember this was my very first webpage. Thank-you.



Marcia A. Snyder
Hollidaysburg Area Junior High School
501 Hart Street
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648



EMAIL

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WELCOME STUDENTS

Welcome! I am happy to welcome you to my Ancient Mesopotamia webpage. I hope you enjoy your visit and learn many new and exciting concepts about ancient Mesopotamia. Be sure to check out all the links; I think you will find some interesting and entertaining areas.

My name is Marcia Snyder, and I teach seventh grade World History/World Geography at Hollidaysburg Area Junior High School in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Hollidaysburg is the county seat of Blair County.

I have taught this course for the past three years, and I hope you enjoy my webpage as much as I enjoyed creating it. Ancient Mesopotamia is one of my favorite units to teach!

To see the exact location of HAJHS in the town of Hollidaysburg, plug in 501 Hart Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.



Hollidaysburg Area School District Information



WELCOME TEACHERS

Hello! My name is Marcia Snyder, and I teach seventh grade World History/World Geography at Hollidaysburg Area Junior High School in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Hollidaysburg is the county seat of Blair County.

I created the webpage "Ancient Mesopotamia " while I was taking a course entitled "Internet In The Curriculum." I hope the ideas and activities presented in this webpage are useful and/or act as a creative catalyst for activities to use in your own classroom.

CLICK HERE

To see the exact location of HAJHS in the town of Hollidaysburg, plug in 501 Hart Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.



Hollidaysburg Area School District Information





IMPORTANT VOCABULARY

MESOPOTAMIA VOCABULARY

The following vocabulary terms will help you better understand ancient Mesopotamia. Some of the terms have links to explore.

TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES

The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers begin in eastern Turkey, flow in a southeast direction, converge in southeast Iraq, and empty in the Persian Gulf. In ancient times, the land between the twin rivers was called Mesopotamia which was the site of the world's first civilization.

MESOPOTAMIA

Mesopotamia means "the land between the rivers" or "the land between the two rivers." This was the site of the world's first civilization, Sumer.

CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION

Mesopotamia is often referred to as the "cradle of civilization" because the world's first civilization occurred there.

SUMER

Sumer was the world's first civilization. It was located in the southern area of Mesopotamia where the twin rivers converged. The people who lived in this area were called Sumerians.

LEVEES

In order to control the destructive seasonal flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the ancient Sumerians constructed levees, or raised areas of earth, in order to hold back the floodwaters.

IRRIGATE

The ancient Sumerians irrigated, or watered, their crops by using a system of irrigation canals. By devising such a irrigation system, the ancient Sumerians were able to successfully establish a permanent civilization.

CITY-STATE

The ancient Sumerians organized themselves into competing city-states. A Sumerian city-state consisted of the city, the surrounding mud brick wall, and the surrounding farmland.

ZIGGURAT

The ziggurat was a temple. It was located in the center of each Sumerian city-state. It housed the city-state's patron god. The term ziggurat means "mountain of god" or "hill of heaven." Since the ziggurat was a sacred place, only priests could enter it.

CUNEIFORM

The ancient Sumerians created the world's first writing system known as cuneiform. The term cuneiform means "wedge-shaped." Sumerian writing is wedge-shaped because of the the type of instrument that was used to create it.

STYLUS

The ancient Sumerians used a stylus to write. A stylus is a wedge-shaped instrument made out of reed. The Sumerians wrote on wet clay tablets with a stylus.

EDUBBA

An edubba is a Sumerian school where young boys learned reading, writing, and arithmetic.

SCRIBE

After graduating from a Sumerian school, a young man became a scribe, or a writer.

PRIEST-KING

In early ancient Sumerian history, the powerful priests were also the kings of the city-states.

GILGAMESH

Gilgamesh is one of ancient Mesopotamia's most legendary historical figures. He was a heroical priest-king from the Sumerian city-state of Uruk.

An empire is a collection of kingdoms under the power of one powerful ruler.

SARGON I

Around 2300 B.C., Sargon I created the world's first empire in the area of ancient Mesopotamia. Since he was from the northern reaches of Mesopotamia known as Akkad, the world's first empire was Akkadian.

HAMMURABI OF BABYLON

About 1800 B.C., the Amorites moved into Mesopotamia. They established their own city-states, and Hammurabi was the king of Babylon. He conquered the Akkadians and ruled all of Mesopotamia. His reign is often described as the "Golden Age of Babylon" because he established many new reforms.

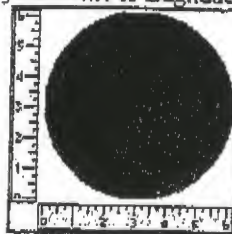


GEOGRAPHY

In ancient times, the Greeks later called the area of the world's first civilization "Mesopotamia" which means "the land between the rivers" or "the land between two rivers." This name was appropriate because ancient Mesopotamia was located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in the present-day Middle Eastern country of Iraq. The twin rivers actually begin in eastern Turkey, flow southeast, converge in southeast Iraq, and empty into the Persian Gulf. Although the hot dry climate mixed with seasonal flooding was difficult and challenging, the farmers of the area learned to control the flooding rivers and used the resulting fertility to produce crops such as barley, wheat, flax, and sesame. The fertile ground also supported many different kinds of fruit and vegetable crops.

HOW FAR IS IT?

How far is it from your home to Baghdad, the capital of Iraq?



Be sure to click on the map section to see the two locations on a world map.

What time is it in Iraq?

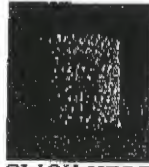


THE SUMERIAN CITY-STATE

The people who established the world's first civilization around 3500 B.C. in southern Mesopotamia were known as the Sumerians.

The Sumerians learned to control the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers by constructing levees and irrigation canals.

records had to be developed. Evolved from simple pictographic writing, Sumerian cuneiform emerged as the world's first writing system. The term cuneiform means "wedge-shaped." It was made up of hundreds of word signs that were "wedge-shaped" due to the shape of the reed pen, or stylus, that was used. The Sumerians wrote on clay tablets that would either be dried in the sun or fired in kilns to make the writing permanent.



CLICK HERE
CUNEIFORM TABLET TRANSLATION

Cuneiform was learned in Sumerian schools called edubbas, or tablet houses. Only a select group of boys were able to attend Sumerian schools. The boys were usually sons of the very wealthy.

Students worked very hard at Sumerian schools, and the school day lasted from early morning until evening. Students were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. The teachers severely disciplined the students. For example, a mistake on a clay tablet could merit a beating.

All the sacrifice and schooling was worth it. Once a student successfully completed twelve years of schooling, he was an official scribe, or writer. This was a prestigious position in Sumerian society. Scribes were very valuable in order to the maintain and improve the record keeping that the Sumerians deemed so very necessary.

The Sumerians also used cylinder seals. Cylinder seals were carved out of stone, and they were used as identification. For example, in order to identify himself, a Sumerian would roll his cylinder seal across a wet clay tablet. This would make an imprint on the tablet that would become permanent by sun-baking or kiln-firing. Cylinder seals were used as signatures are used today.



GILGAMESH

As stated before, in early Sumerian history, priests were also the kings of the city-states. Gilgamesh was one of the most heroic priest-kings of this time. He was the priest-king of Uruk which was located on the Euphrates River approximately fifty miles northwest of Ur.

The oldest written story in the world delineates Gilgamesh's legendary deeds. In the story, Gilgamesh is characterized as being both human and divine. Gilgamesh and his companion Enkidu travel the world performing heroic acts.

CLICK HERE
Gilgamesh, Part I



Gilgamesh, Part II



CLICK HERE

An original stone carving depicting Hammarabi's receipt of the code of laws.



CONTRIBUTIONS

The contributions affecting the modern world from our ancient ancestors in Mesopotamia are numerous. The ancient Sumerians created the world's first civilization where people settled together in one area known as the city-state. For this accomplishment, ancient Mesopotamia is often referred to as the "cradle of civilization."

Another contribution vastly affecting the modern era was the Sumerians' creation of a writing system. Although we do not use the same writing system today, it spawned the many different writing models that led to today's writing.

Other inventions include the water clock, the twelve-month calendar based on lunar cycles, the wheel, the plow, and the sailboat. All these inventions improved the daily life of the Sumerians.



VOCABULARY EXERCISES

In order to reinforce vocabulary terms and definitions, I use the following vocabulary exercises:

SAME/DIFFERENT ASSOCIATIONS - Read each pair of words. If the terms are related, place a (S) on the blank line. If the terms are unrelated, place a (D) on the blank line.

1. ____ TEMPLE-ZIGGURAT
2. ____ SARGON I-CODE OF LAW
3. ____ EDUBBA-PALACE
4. ____ CUNEIFORM-STYLUS
5. ____ GILGAMESH-PRIEST-KING

+/- ASSOCIATIONS - Read each pair of words. If the terms are related, place a (+) on the blank line. If the terms are unrelated, place a (-) on the blank line.

1. ____ SCRIBE-WRITER
2. ____ EMPIRE-URUK

MESOPOTAMIA

1. THE _____ AND _____ ARE TWIN RIVERS THAT BEGIN IN THE MOUNTAINS OF TURKEY. TODAY, THE LAND BETWEEN THE RIVERS IS KNOWN AS _____. IN ANCIENT TIMES, IT WAS CALLED _____.
2. THE PEOPLE WHO SETTLED IN SOUTHERN MESOPOTAMIA AROUND 3500 B.C. WERE CALLED THE _____. THEIR AREA OF MESOPOTAMIA WAS CALLED _____.
3. WHAT DID THE SUMERIANS USE TO CONTROL THE TWIN RIVERS?
4. WHAT CROPS DID THE SUMERIANS PRODUCE?
5. HOW DID THE SUMERIANS IRRIGATE, OR WATER, THEIR CROPS?
6. HOW DID THE SUMERIANS BUILD THEIR HOUSES AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS?
7. DESCRIBE THE MAKE-UP OF A SUMERIAN CITY-STATE.
8. AT THE CENTER OF EACH SUMERIAN CITY-STATE WAS A TEMPLE, CALLED A _____.
9. WHO ATTENDED SCHOOLS IN SUMER?
10. WHAT WERE THE SCHOOLS IN SUMER CALLED?
11. WHAT TYPE OF WRITING DID THE SUMERIANS USE?
12. WHAT INSTRUMENT DID THE SUMERIANS USE TO PRODUCE THEIR WRITING?
13. WHY WAS A SCRIBE AN IMPORTANT POSITION IN SUMERIAN SOCIETY?
14. WHO WAS SARGON I, AND WHAT SIGNIFICANT ROLE DID HE PLAY IN THE HISTORY OF MESOPOTAMIA?
15. LIST FOUR REFORMS, OR IMPROVEMENTS, THAT HAMMURABI CARRIED OUT IN MESOPOTAMIA.
16. WHAT WAS HAMMURABI'S MOST FAMOUS REFORM?
17. WHY IS MESOPOTAMIA CALLED "THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION"?
18. WHAT WERE THE MANY THINGS THAT THE SUMERIANS INVENTED THAT HELPED IMPROVE THEIR WELL-BEING?



QUIZ

In order to reinforce content learning, I use quizzes to evaluate student knowledge.

SAMPLE QUIZ

SAME/DIFFERENT ASSOCIATIONS - Print a (S) on the blank line if the terms are related. Print a (D) on the blank line if the terms are unrelated.

1. _____ SCRIBE-DOCTOR
2. _____ REFORM-IMPROVEMENT
3. _____ IRRIGATE-WATER
4. _____ EDUBBA-CHURCH
5. _____ TEMPLE-ASSEMBLY
6. _____ GILGAMESH-MERCHANT

CLOSE-ENDED SORTS. Draw a line through the term that does not belong to the group.

1. BABYLON, MESOPOTAMIA, UR, URUK

3. PRIESTS, FARMERS, SAILORS, UNSKILLED WORKERS
4. WHEEL, PLOW, PAPYRUS, SAILBOAT
5. LAW, DANCE, IRRIGATION, TAXES

MULTIPLE CHOICE - Read each statement carefully. Decide what answer best completes the statement. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS NOT A CHARACTERISTIC OF CIVILIZATION?
A. CITIES
B. BANDS
C. PRIESTS
2. GOVERNMENTS OF MESOPOTAMIA CENTERED AROUND THE _____.
A. CITY-STATE
B. SCULPTURES
C. EMPIRE
3. MESOPOTAMIA, LAND OF THE EARLIEST KNOWN CIVILIZATION, WAS INHABITED BY A GROUP OF PEOPLE CALLED THE _____.
A. EGYPTIANS
B. IRAQIS
C. SUMERIANS
4. WHAT WERE SUMERIAN BUILDINGS MADE OF?
A. CONCRETE
B. ANIMAL HIDES
C. MUD BRICK
5. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMERIAN CONTRIBUTION TO MODERN SOCIETY?
A. HIEROGLYPHICS
B. SPEAR THROWER
C. PLOW

ANALOGIES - Circle the term that best completes the analogy.

1. MEDITERRANEAN : SEA :: TIGRIS : (BAY, RIVER, STREAM)
2. SUMERIANS : MESOPOTAMIA :: AMERICANS : (SAUDI ARABIA, U.S., IRAQ)
3. HAMMURABI : CODE OF LAW :: SARGON I : (TAXES, PRIEST-KING, EMPIRE)
4. UR : BABYLON :: PHILADELPHIA : (IRAQ, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA)



HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

I often use hands-on activities in the classroom to make the content more meaningful and to reach all the different types of learning styles of my students. Beforehand, I will create a direction sheet and scoring rubric before presenting the activity to the class. I will present the activity, explain the scoring rubric, model and demonstrate how to successfully complete the activity, and provide concrete examples of finished products which usually are student-made from previous years.

Below is a sample list of activities that I have used while teaching the Mesopotamia unit. A brief description of each activity is also included.

1. CITY-STATE CREATION. Using posterboard and colored pencils, the student designs a Sumerian city-state based on the description in the textbook. Items that should be on the map include: a title,

- winding streets, government buildings, courtyards, and homes of the different social classes.
2. **CARVED CUNEIFORM IN CLAY.** After presenting a cuneiform lesson and providing a cuneiform reference sheet, the student creates a clay tablet with cuneiform inscriptions that must be decipherable.
 3. **3-D ZIGGURATS.** In cooperative groups, students create ziggurat replicas using either sugar cubes, milk cartons, or styrofoam.



UNIT EVALUATIONS

In lieu of traditional chapter tests, I try to design alternative ways to assess student knowledge. A scoring rubric is always presented to the students when explaining the evaluation so they know how to successfully complete the evaluation.

1. **NEWSPAPER CREATION.** The student will have to design a front page of a modern-day newspaper using ancient Mesopotamian content. Items that should be on the front page include a mast, a date line, a byline, a wire service, a cut, a cutline, and two articles relating to ancient Mesopotamia.
2. **YOU ARE THERE.** The student has to take on the persona of an ancient Mesopotamia and answer questions created by the teacher. The student also has to provide a diagram of his/her locale. All of the information will be placed in a packet prepared by the teacher.
3. **WEBPAGE CREATION.** The student creates a webpage of ancient Mesopotamia to demonstrate his/her knowledge of the area. After all, that is the objective of the course in which I created this webpage.



December 19, 2011

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the sixth grade Social Studies curriculum and for your willingness to present your perspective to the curriculum reconsideration committee. Committee members benefitted from your presentation.

The committee looked at your request and also all the curriculum materials used in sixth grade and made the decision to uphold using the History Alive! curriculum materials. We based this decision on the following:

- Our teachers are trained to provide a unbiased context for each lesson and explain the material fairly and equally for each religion covered.
- A "Best Practice" from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: "Local School Districts are free to add other topics they consider to be important--The origins, ideas, moral codes, institutions, and spread of major religious traditions, such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism."
- The Common Core State Standards require sixth Grade Social Studies to use primary and secondary sources.
- The Grade Level Expectations for our curriculum require students to be able to compare and contrast the major ideas and beliefs of different cultures.
- The quoted material used in History Alive! is cited from a primary source and therefore needs to be in quotation marks.

Although our decision was to uphold the use of History Alive! materials, the committee has asked the teachers to continue to review other supplementary materials available to see if there is a better option. We also extend the invitation for you to meet with us if you have additional questions. We are happy to provide an overview of the overall curriculum so you can see the broader context of the lessons cited in your curriculum review inquiry. We are also willing to work with parents and are open to providing alternate assignments when necessary.

Again, we thank you for your time and are always willing to look at our practices for continuous improvement. If you still have concerns regarding the curriculum, please contact Dr. Jahnke's office to continue the review process.

Sincerely,

Cathy M. Richter, Ph.D.
Principal